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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

Wednesday, December 4, 1940

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "Home Accidents Invite Doctors and Undertakers." Information from the Farm Security Administration, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

Guess where you're safer these days - at home or on the highway "At home?"..... No, that's wrong On the highway. Figures show that people are more likely to get killed right at home than out on the road in a car. Thirty-two thousand people were killed last year in home accidents.

Almost five million more were injured. Some were hurt only slightly, others seriously. Some cut a finger that got infected or broke an arm or leg. Others must walk on crutches the rest of their lives. Maybe you know some of these people. Maybe you were one yourself..... I hope not.

Today the Farm Security Administration reports to us about ways it encourages its borrower families to maintain safety at home. Farm Security doesn't believe in carrying a rabbit's foot in your pocket to keep from getting hurt. It believes in using your head and saving your neck - in making "Home, Sweet Home" become "Home, Safe Home."

In home accidents, more than half of the people who were killed last year died from falls. They fell downstairs, slipped on loose rugs, or stumbled over toys or chair rockers. A Vermont woman slipped on a wet kitchen floor and broke her arm, a Nebraska woman tripped over a clothes-basket and hurt her back, a Missouri child fell off a stepladder and cracked some ribs, and a man in Oregon fell down the cellar steps and broke his collar bone.

So home supervisors of the Farm Security Administration work with their families to prevent such falls and accidents. They point out unsafe conditions in the

home and urge that they be removed. They insist, for example, that all stairways should have good handrails. Stairways without railings shouldn't exist, and stairways with broken railings are worse than none. Broken steps are dangerous too; a few nails and some boards may easily save a life or limb. It's easier to mend a broken step than a broken neck, and carpenters cost less than undertakers.

Of course, stairways should be well-lighted, small rugs should never be put at the head or foot of stairs to slip on, and the habit of setting things on steps - like buckets and mops and brooms - is unforgiveable. Steps cluttered up with clothing or boxes or fruit jars may cause somebody to miss a step and land in the hospital.

Farm Security families themselves are waging a campaign against toys on steps or floors. Many are providing toy baskets or boxes, or dresser drawers or shelves for blocks, trains, fire engines, dolls, wooden soldiers, and roller skates. They are also mending or junking wobbly stepladders, rickety stools, and broken-legged chairs, and tacking down loose rugs so they won't rumple and trip someone. Some women sew old fruit jar rubbers under the edges of small throw rugs to keep them from slipping.

Next to falls, the National Safety Council of America says more people die from burns in home accidents than from any other cause. A New York state woman was killed when she tried to light a stove with a blazing newspaper, a Texas child pulled a lighted lamp from a table and died of burns, and in Colorado a whole family burned to death when a defective flue set a house afire.

Farm Security urges its families to watch chimneys, stovepipes, and fireplace: It advises them to repair broken chimneys without waiting for rainy days, to replace shaky stovepipes that bulge open or get cracks in them, to put metal or asbestos plate under stoves, to fix bad electrical connections, and to screen fireplaces so coals and sparks won't fall out on the floor and children won't crawl into them.

Right now, with winter coming on, Farm Security suggests that its families clean the soot out of chimneys, examine the pipes to see if holes have rusted in them during the summer, and look at the joints to see if they fit tightly. It also advises that they put ashes in metal containers instead of wooden boxes, never hang clothes on lines over hot stoves or put wet shoes in ovens to dry, and destroy rubbish and trash that have gathered in attics, basements, closets, corners, and under staircase.

It reminds people that the old time-tested way of perking up a lazy fire with a little kerosene or a few drops of gasoline still helps make a fat graveyard. Well known last words are "I've done it all my life and nothing ever happened before."

Then there are burns and scalds to add to the home death toll. More little children die from burns and scalds than from any other home accident cause. They fall into tubs or buckets of hot water, or pull pans of hot things from stoves or tables on top of them. A Utah youngster upset a pot of boiling rice on himself from the kitchen range, a Missouri three-year-old fell into a kettle of boiling clothes left on the kitchen floor, a California tot got too near a gas heater with his celluloid duck and it burst into flames.

There are other home accidents too - cuts, bruises, poisonings, infections, and so on. So home is not always the safest, happiest place in the world, is it? Far from it. In fact, it is getting worse. Last year there were 500 more deaths from home accidents than the year before. Accidents not only cause grief and pain, but pile up doctor, hospital, and funeral bills. Last year they touched the life or pocket-book of one out of every four Americans.

Farm Security urges, by the way, that all its borrower families have first aid kits in their homes. Many a person's life is saved by first aid treatment before the doctor comes. Ordinary kits include sterile bandages, gauze, absorbent cotton, adhesive tape, iodine, and ammonia.

Now our time is up and Farm Security hopes its suggestions to borrower families may be helpful to you.

